Christian Community

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Some Resource Materials About The United Nations

Two of the themes suggested for this Fall's Emphasis on Christian Commitment and Christian Community are "Our Christian Responsibility for World Community" and "Paths to World Community." The Manual for the emphasis period offers many suggestions in this connection, with discussion questions, and the titles of useful resource materials, some of which are available through the office of the Commission on Christian Social Action. We do not attempt to repeat what is presented there; but this page is given to supplement the suggestions contained in the Manual, *Commitment for Christian Living*, which is already in the hands of pastors.

FILMS

In thinking about Paths to World Community some churches will find it worth while to make use of one or more of the excellent films which tell about the work of the United Nations these last ten years. The projects undertaken by such agencies as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF, the United Nations International Children's Fund, and UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, are well covered in the series of News Magazine Films which can be rented from any UN film distributor at $2.50 each. These films take you around the world, with brief visits to underdeveloped areas where the above named agencies have been given important jobs to do. They show the values of the United Nations cooperative approach toward the solution of health and economic problems in many places.

PLAYS

Or a play could be given. Aileen Fisher and Olive Rabe have recently written a volume of non-royalty plays, playlets, and recitations entitled *United*

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THE UNITED NATIONS AND YOU

The Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations on October 24th affords American Christians a valuable opportunity to think of their relation to and their responsibility for this significant World Organization. The Message issued by the National Council of Churches for use on World Order Sunday, October 23rd, bears the slogan, "The churches helped create the United Nations—the churches support the United Nations." In our denominational Emphasis, Our Christian Responsibility for World Community is related to the whole question of Christian Commitment and Christian Community. And the United Nations is singled out as one of the major "paths" toward the objective of a world living in peace and justice (See *Christian Community*, April, 1955).

There are, however, many who have not even yet learned to appreciate the true importance and meaning of this international organ. Not long ago the officials of a large American city were plagued by a superpatriot's charges that the flags of the United Nations and its member states were flying in the city's public square from the same height as the flag of the United States. The authorities replied that the American flag was actually a considerable fraction of a foot higher than the others—but not high enough for the zealous citizen. The town fathers obligingly lengthened one flagpole to salvage national pride! So, even in a community that is far-sighted enough to give recognition to the world community and its political instruments, there are those who regard the UN as a rival to the nation's interests rather than as an agency that extends and promotes them.

It would, therefore, seem appropriate to remind ourselves briefly how the UN is of benefit to us and how we for our part may relate ourselves to it.

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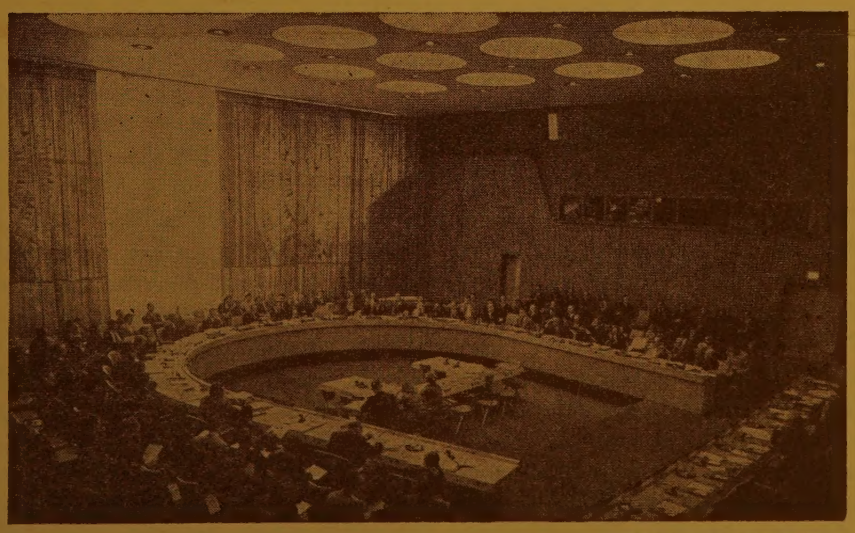

UNITED NATIONS Photo

United Nations Economic and Social Council in Session

United Nations

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What the UN Offers Us

First, *the UN contributes to our security.* We have to recall only the series of local wars which have been kept local and the mobilization of the resources and public opinion of the world at the time of the Korean crisis, to appreciate what the UN has done for us on this score. We can only guess as to how far and how often it has operated as a check to those who might have gone much farther in transgressing the peace of the world and our own security. The UN offers a continual possibility for conference and conciliation on the whole range of problems—the control of armaments, the violations of human rights, the freedom of dependent peoples, the settlement of disputes—which affect the international community and ourselves as inevitably a part of it.

Secondly, *the UN serves as both a symbol and an expression of our solidarity with the rest of the world.* If security is a primary consideration for the nation of which we are members, the visible instrument of our oneness and fellowship with the great majority of the human family in the UN is of even deeper meaning to us as Christians. Faith sees that we are one with all men in our origin and nature, and the movement of history has made it very evident that we are one in our fate. Whether that fate is catastrophe or destiny depends in part on how we regard it. At any rate, today no nation can live to itself; just as we need the more-than-local unity of the nation, we need institutions that embody our membership in that which is more universal than the nation. However imperfectly, the UN offers us that.

In the third place, *the UN renders many solid services which the members of the world community require.* Some of these services—cooperation in communication, navigation, postal interchange, weather charting, etc. — were established before the UN and are only made more effective by being related to it. Others are new and timely—such as those symbolized by UNESCO, FAO, WHO, and the rest. Cooperation for the technical and economic advancement of the less highly developed nations is of great benefit not only to them but also to ourselves; for the best prospects for friendly relations and mutually beneficial commerce are with peoples free of the blight of ignorance, poverty, and disease.

Once again, *the UN provides some of the discipline which we in common with other rich and powerful nations need.* The moral disapproval of world opinion has often operated against those who condoned slavery and aggression. There are also times when we need to be reminded how our proposals, our behavior, and our mere possession of wealth and power look to other nations. If we are wise, we will listen to what independent judges like the representatives of India or the Philippines have to say. It may save us from many a blunder and moral error which has befallen other mighty and prosperous empires. Indeed, whether or not we learn how to live under the burden of our unique strength may have more to do with our ultimate survival and freedom than that strength itself!

And What Is My Role?

We all, as citizens of our nation, share in the benefits which the United Nations offers us. But each of us, in turn, has something to say about how we shall relate ourselves to this benefactor.

One possible reaction is that of the cautious opportunist or "minimalist." He is ready to "go along" with the United Nations so far as it follows the line of United States policy. He is opposed to enlarging its operations and he fights to cut down American appropriations for the UN and its special programs. He will threaten to "pull out" if the UN does something that displeases himself or his own wing of his party. He is not very enthusiastic when other nations—or his own president!—talk about conciliation or arms reduction or pooling atoms for peace.

A more violent reaction is that of the extreme nationalist or outright "oppositionist." He wants to get the US out of the UN and the UN out of the US as soon as possible. He spends much time and money attacking the UN as a sinister world government and UNESCO (of which Russia, too, has been very suspicious!) as "communistic." He wants the United States to go it alone and pay no heed to the give-and-take of world opinion, or even to what the representatives of friendly, non-Communist states have to say. He would go farther and make it difficult if not impossible for the Government of the United States to enter any binding agreements with other countries covering mutual defense, trade, or the protection of human rights. He apparently assumes that our power, our national ideals, and our self-interest not only entitle us to do as we please but actually enable us to get away with it. World community, to that kind of nationalist, is meaningless.

At the other extreme is the absolutist, or "impossibilist." He wants the United Nations to be able to do everything, right away, all at once. If he cannot eliminate national armies and regional defense organizations at once, he hopes to amend the Charter to abolish the veto, maybe even to set up a full-fledged world government. Often he has objectives in mind that are worth keeping in mind for eventual realization or adaptation. But often, too, he has purposes which, if pressed, would strain the bonds of cooperation which have been achieved.

What would be a reasonable, responsible position for a Christian citizen to take? This would appear to involve supporting the United States government in its support of the UN and its policies; working for full and ungrudging appropriations for its vital programs; pressing patiently for the settlement of disputes and the reduction of armaments by international agreement under effective safeguards; keeping informed of issues before the UN and answering unfair attacks upon the UN; encouraging our government to use UN channels

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Some Resource Materials

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***Nations Plays and Programs*, published by Plays, Incorporated, and selling for $3.50. There are 15 plays, most of them very usable in church or school groups. They run from ten minutes to an hour, and most of them are full of information about UN achievements. There are also several short playlets in the book, prepared entirely for small children.**

BOOKS

The Church Peace Union a couple of years ago published a little book by Justin Wroe Nixon, which deserves the attention of adult church groups. It is called *The United Nations and Our Religious Heritage*. It could be an elective in a church school curriculum. There is enough material there for three or four class sessions. Set that book beside Dr. Walter Van Kirk's *The Church and the United Nations* and Zocca's *The United Nations—Action for Peace* and you can get a great picture of the United Nations, from a churchman's point of view.

Among the many books recently published about the United Nations is a little paperbacked volume by David Cushman Coyle. The book came out in May as a Signet Key Book (35 cents), called *The United Nations, and How It Works*. There are 166 pages, packed with a fascinating account of the way the various agencies of the UN have carried on their work these past ten years, along with a record of success and of failure. The book seems to be quite up-to-date in presenting the issues that have been before the UN for discussion. There is a good, brief chapter, also, on the philosophy of the United Nations. This concludes with these words: "If there is any way that the human race can ride out the great revolution of our days, and live, these ways are most likely to be found in the slow, painful, but determined labor of the United Nations of the world." The appendix to Coyle's book offers, in outline form, information about organizations in the UN, and the Charter which was adopted in 1945.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

There are some easy ways to get acquainted with the United Nations program. One of these is offered in *What's Your UN—Q?*, a quiz sheet prepared by the United States Committee for United Nations Day. Use the quiz at a social gathering, and have fun. And then look at the *Box Score on the UN*, published this summer by the National Education Association's Committee on International Relations. This is a UN Inventory, as of June, 1955, showing twenty-two problems on which the United Nations has acted, usually affecting constructively the lives and well being of millions of the world's people. That oft-repeated question, "What does the UN cost the United States?" is nicely answered, too, in one corner of the "Box Score." The figures are given (total cost to the United States in a recent year being $92,656,461) and a per capita breakdown, like this:

For the UN budget	8 cents
For ten specialized agencies	6 cents
For specific UN programs, including technical assistance	42 cents
Per capita total	56 cents

There is a reminder, also, of the fact that more than $37,000,000 are spent by the United Nations in the United States annually, through salaries, purchases of goods, etc.

A 12-page folder for United Nations Week (October 16-24), published by the Church Peace Union, is full of suggestions for programs and projects. It even offers three sermon themes, with texts and a few key ideas! This folder is being sent to pastors and social action committee chairmen.

Another 12-page booklet was distributed this summer by the General Department of United Church Women. It was written by Dorothy T. Groeling, and bears the title *No Islands Any More*. Use it for readings and discussion questions on four topics which are constantly before us these days: Atoms for Peace; Disarmament; Refugees; and World Trade and Economic Development.

For serious study church groups will want to turn to the statement issued by the World Council of Churches in Evanston in 1954. It is called "Christians in the Struggle for World Community," and it appears as the report of Section IV of the World Council's Assembly in *Evanston Speaks*. Section headings are: The Desire for Peace and the Fear of War; Living Together in a Divided World; What Nations Owe to One Another; The United Nations and World Community; The Protection of Human Rights; Towards an International Ethos; and The Churches and Specific International Tensions. Keep in mind also the report of the National Council's Cleveland Study Conference (1953), *Christian Faith and InternationalResponsibility*. Both of these documents are concerned with more than the United Nations. They give Christians much reason to consider their responsibility to find the paths that lead to world community.

For a continuing study of the United Nations and of our Christian Responsibility for World Community we recommend *A Christian Newsletter on International Affairs*, published monthly (ten issues a year for one dollar) by the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches. This multigraphed news letter contains many up-to-the-minute observations on United Nations agenda matters, and an analysis of legislation on international affairs which is pending in Congress.

A word needs to be said, too, for *United Nations Review*, the official journal of the United Nations, published by its Department of Public Information at a subscription rate of $4.50 annually. It may be ordered from Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. It is designed to advance public information of all aspects of the work of the General Assembly, and of the related agencies.

United Nations

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wherever appropriate; using other instruments of cooperation and mutual security under conditions which fully safeguard the integrity and work of the UN; working for the eventual membership of all nations and the fullest practicable development of the Organization.

Several years ago in *A Christian's Primer of the United Nations*, the Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church attempted to express the individual Christian's opportunity to serve the cause of individual peace in these very personal terms:

1. I can tell others about the UN and its accomplishments.

2. I can arrange for meetings, institutes, UN information centers and better newspapers and radio coverage.

3. I can try to see that my representatives in Congress work for legislation supporting the UN.

4. I can try to understand the other countries whose fate is bound up with ours in the UN.

5. I can practice the principles of the UN at home in the community where I live.

These suggestions, with those offered in the accompanying article concerning what we can do as groups and as churches, may help us translate our gratitude for the UN's first decade into practical support for the next!

Action Notes: For Pastors, Committees, and Christian Citizens

Barring a national emergency which would call Congress back into session, your Senators and Representatives will be more or less at home until after the first of the year. This might be a good time to visit one of these members of Congress in his, or her, home community and discuss the status of national legislation in which you as a Christian citizen have a concern.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

The present Congress has some achievements to its credit, particularly in the international phases of American politics. Because the House showed less enthusiasm for these programs than the Senate, the President's request for $3.5 billion in foreign aid funds was reduced to $3.286 in the compromise authorization bill, but the final *appropriation bill* allowed only *$2.7 billion.* $700 million of this was sliced from military assistance, but the President's Fund for Asian Economic Development was cut in half, to $100 million.

So, too, authority to enter reciprocal trade agreements extended for three years, but the Tariff Commission is permitted to recommend tariff or other protection if any segment of an industry is in danger of being hurt.

Through the statesmanship of men like Senator George, the President has been encouraged to explore the possibilities of conciliation and the relaxation of international tensions.

On the domestic side, Congress showed itself more liberal than the Administration in raising the minimum wage from 75 cents to one dollar per hour.

The present Congress seems, also, to be more sensitive to constitutional processes and good taste in carrying out its investigation function. The chief offenders have been retired to the side-lines and, while there is always the possibility of their re-emerging into the limelight, they are no longer frightening their peers into silence or acquiescence.

RESERVE PLAN

The compromise Reserve plan finally adopted provides three options—(a) a two-year draft plus four year Reserve, (b) six months training plus 7½ years Reserve, (c) direct Reserve enlistment to age 28. The chief innovation is the tightening up of Reserve requirements. One's attitude toward this program will depend on a number of factors, particularly the question, assuming the need for a Defense establishment at all. Is it better to have a large Active Force or a large Ready Reserve? It is expected that the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches will take a new look at the entire problem of universal military training and service in the light of the present situation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Some of the most important domestic problems have not been adequately taken care of. As reported in the special supplement for *Christian Community* (June, 1955), the Senate passed a housing bill which was a noticeable improvement over that recommended by the Administration. The House, however, in its version went below the President's request (35,000 each for two years) and the resulting compromise authorizes only 45,000 additional units. The Senate accepted this compromise with the understanding the whole housing program, including provisions for low-rent housing would be *re-examined when Congress reconvenes.*

The School Construction bill (HR 7535) was reported to the House too late for action and the Senate Committee on Public Welfare delayed completion of its recommendations until the House acts.

The Kefauver investigation brought to light enough evidence of the way government officials and private power individuals negotiated the agreement to "kill" the Dixon-Yates contract. It remains to be seen how much the government will be forced to pay in cancellation penalties. Congress also rescued the public power and rural electrification program from efforts to cripple them.

A battle which is foreseen in the coming Congress is between two rival bills dealing with natural gas. One which has already passed the House would exempt producers from regulation, with the obvious result that the consumer would lose a major protection against exorbitant prices. The other, introduced by Senator Paul Douglas, would confirm federal regulation in line with the recent ruling of the Supreme Court.

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Seminar Dates Announced

The annual Churchmen's Washington Seminar, sponsored by the Commission on Christian Social Action in cooperation with agencies of 17 other denominations and the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches, will be held February 7 to 10, 1956.

Since the Evangelical and Reformed delegation is limited to 24 persons, applications should be submitted to the office of the Commission for approval as soon as possible.

Social Action Features Commitment

The September issue of *Social Action* magazine offers an additional resource for the Emphasis on Christian Commitment in the form of an article by Professor Roger L. Shinn on "Evangelism, Stewardship, and Social Action" with comments by Thomas K. Thompson, executive director of the National Council of Churches' Joint Department of Stewardship and Benevolence. Copies may be had from the Commission office at 25 cents each. Better, send $2 for a year's subscription.